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 HCC Sermon
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 Tags: Advent; Luke 04

INTRODUCTION

1. Image: There was a prophecy in Narnia when it experienced it's never-ending winter (always winter and never Christmas). When Adam's flesh and Adam's bone sits at Cair Paravel in throne. The evil time will be over and done.
2. Need: We live in evil times that we wish would end.
3. Subject: How do we proclaim the good news that Jesus proclaimed?
4. Text: Luke 4:16-20
5. Preview:
 - a. What enables us to proclaim the good news in Jesus's absence?
 - b. What is the good news that Jesus proclaimed, so that we might proclaim it?
 - c. How can we be confident in the good news that Jesus proclaimed?

BODY

- I. The Spirit of God enables us to proclaim the good news in Jesus's absence (4:18a).
 - A. The Spirit of God enabled Jesus to proclaim the good news (4:18a)
 - B. Depend on God's Spirit when you proclaim the good news.
 1. Evidence of Spirit dependence is intimacy with God.
 2. Evidence of Spirit dependence is gospel proclamation.
- II. The good news is that deliverance from evil has come (4:18b-19)
 - A. Jesus proclaimed the good news of freedom beginning a new era
 1. Jesus proclaimed deliverance for people (4:18b)
 2. Jesus proclaimed a new era (4:19)
 - B. Proclaim deliverance to those who are under the bondage of evil
- III. We can be confident in the good news that Jesus proclaimed because he gave his life to make it happen.
 - A. Jesus arrived on the earth many years ago so that he would eventually give his life to secure deliverance from sin to those who believe.
 - B. We experience the deliverance in part now and will experience it completely at his return.
 - C. Proclaim the good news confidently.

CONCLUSION

1. Summary: Proclaim the good news that the deliverance from evil has been accomplished because we are God's Spirit empowered messengers.
2. Closing Image: Aslan would give his life on the stone table so that the sons and daughters of Adam might sit on the thrones of Narnia and end the evil reign of the White Witch.

MANUSCRIPT

The book: *The Lion, Witch, and the Wardrobe* describes Narnia being in a perpetual winter. You would hear Narnians say often: "Always winter and never Christmas". The cold and bleary weather reminded all of Narnia, who ruled them. The White Witch. You always had to be careful of what you said because you never knew if the secret police might be spying. But there was prophecy that gave the Narnians hope. *When Adam's flesh and Adam's bone sits at Cair Paravel in throne. The evil time will be over and done.* They longed for the day when the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve to appear again in the land of Narnia. For their appearance would mean that the evil time of never-ending winter would come to an end. The secret police would be dismantled. The white witch's reign would be ended.

We live in evil times that we wish would end. I'm not just referring to the weather. Although one might argue that Houstonians live in a never-ending heat wave. But you know what I mean. We live in evil days. Evil manifests itself in so many ways. Evil manifests itself in broken relationships. Some of us feel anxious about the upcoming family Christmas dinner because you don't know if aunt Betty and uncle Andy will revisit a grudge from their childhood. You don't receive an invitation to a family Christmas dinner because you received a portion of an inheritance that they think belonged to others. Evil manifests itself in disease. This may be the first Christmas where your uncle and aunt may not be able to join you because a terminal illness claimed their lives. Or there may be a gloom over your Christmas celebrations when your good friend shares that she has MS. Evil manifests itself in our inability to do good. We know we should remain silent rather than speak a rash word. But when we hear someone make an

irrational assertion, we find ourselves speaking before assessing whether we should have said anything. We live in an evil age. But do is there a message that predicts its end? Is there anything that tells us that this evil age won't last forever?

There is. We have a message. There is good news. In fact, Jesus proclaimed this good news thousands of years ago. As his followers, we have been entrusted with this same message. How do we proclaim the good news that Jesus proclaimed? What do we need to do to make this news known?

Thousands of years ago when Jesus first proclaimed this news, it happened when Israel lived under the rule of an oppressive foreign king. This king would be willing to slaughter a town of infants to protect his rule. They also lived under the rule of a foreign empire, the Roman empire. This Roman empire would employ Israelites as tax collectors to extort their fellow countrymen. But there was a hope among Israel. A messiah would be coming. A Savior would deliver them from their foreign oppressors. It would a king like David who would raise them up to new heights of glory. Into this time of Israel's history, Jesus came.

In this year's advent series, we'll be exploring what did Jesus come to do. What did he come to accomplish. This first message will meditate on the good news that Jesus came to proclaim.

The account of Jesus first proclaiming this good news is found in Luke, chapter 4. If you have your Bibles, then please turn there with me. Thank you, Lexi, for reading this morning's passage. Luke, chapter 4.

To learn how we can proclaim the good news, we'll be thinking through three questions. First question. What enables us to proclaim the good news in Jesus's absence? Since Jesus is no

longer here, what qualifies us to serve as messengers for Jesus? What gives us the credentials to proclaim this good news. Second question. What is the good news that Jesus proclaimed, so that we might proclaim it? What is the content of this good news? Last question. How can we be confident in the good news that Jesus proclaimed? How can we be assured that the good news is true? What validates this good news?

Let's tackle the first question. What enables us to proclaim the good news in Jesus's absence? The Spirit of God. **The Spirit of God enables us to proclaim the good news in Jesus's absence.** The indwelling Holy Spirit empowers us to serve as God's heralds. The presence of the Spirit qualifies us to be his messenger. **The Spirit of God enables us to proclaim the good news in Jesus's absence.**

We'll see that the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus for the same work. He enabled Jesus to proclaim the good news. Let's look at the background of the passage. Our narrative takes place in the town of Nazareth. It's Jesus's hometown located west of the Sea of Galilee. Look at verse 16. *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up.* Luke then describes the habit of Jesus. Every Sabbath, he would attend service at Synagogue. A typical service at Synagogue would involve first a call to worship. It would typically the recitation of the Shema (Deut 6:4-7). There would then be a prayer. Two readings from Hebrew Bible come next. First, there's a reading from Torah. Second, there's a reading of the prophets. This would explain why Jesus receives a scroll from Isaiah and reads it. Look at verse 17. *And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written...*

The idea of Spirit empowered proclamation of the good news is found in the first section of the reading from Isaiah. Look at verse 18. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me.*

Now this text is from Isaiah 61. Isaiah 61 occurs in the section of Isaiah that discusses the restoration of Israel after a period of exile. The prophet Isaiah sees himself as God's spokesperson because the Spirit of God had filled him.

Just as the presence of the Spirit of God qualified Isaiah to be God's spokesperson, the spirit of God qualified Jesus to be his messenger. Now you'll note that we're in Luke, chapter 4, verse 16. But if you go back to Luke, chapter three, you'll read of Jesus receiving baptism. This coincides with the Holy Spirit coming upon him. Following his baptism, the Holy Spirit leads him into wilderness. Why would the Holy Spirit do that? The Holy Spirit leads people into situations where they will experience conflict with their sinful flesh. The flesh refers to our inward disposition to preserve itself. Often, we're willing to engage in sin to do this. The Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness to do battle with his flesh. Luke highlights three major temptations that Jesus faces. In each situation, Jesus remains faithful to the Lord. Satan then departs awaiting another time to test Jesus's flesh. Coming out of the wilderness, he is filled with the power of the Spirit (4:14). Where does the Spirit bring him after the temptation in the wilderness? He brings Jesus home to Nazareth. The presence of the Holy Spirit in Jesus qualifies him to be God's spokesperson.

But Jesus is no longer here. After he died and rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven. He's coming back. But what do we do in his absence? Although Jesus is no longer here physically, he's here spiritually. He is with us because he sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within

person who has professed faith in his redeeming work. This means that every Christian has the Holy Spirit within them.

Now I want to be careful. The words: dwell or takes up residence within us are metaphors. I mean, if a surgeon does open heart surgery on me, then he's not going to find the Holy Spirit there. We use the images of dwelling or taking up residence to describe the deep intimacy that we experience with God the father through the work of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. After all, you don't allow anyone except the closest of family to live with you for extended periods of time. The Spirit of God helps us to understand and live out gospel realities. This includes proclaiming the good news.

What are the implications? The implication of the Spirit of God dwelling within all believers means that each of us serve as God's messengers. There's not a special set of believers, who share the good news, while others refrain. While some might be better skilled at proclaiming good news, it doesn't mean that we don't have a responsibility to make the good news known. If we all have a responsibility to make the good news known, then how do we do it?

To make the good news known requires us to depend on the Spirit. For many of us, if we had a choice, then we would prefer to remain silent. This is our flesh operating. The flesh says things like: "If you talk about Jesus, then this relationship will be over. Do you want to end this relationship? If you bring up Jesus at work, then you'll get fired from your position. If you talk about talk about your beliefs on this moral issue, then people will that that you're intolerant."

To do battle with these thoughts requires us to depend on the Spirit. Even if this relationship with over, my relationship with God is unchangeable. If I get fired from my job

because I talked about faith, then God will provide for me another position. God will be pleased with me even if I people think that I'm intolerant.

If the Spirit of God enables us to proclaim the good news, then what is the good news? What is the good news that Jesus proclaimed? After all, we want to proclaim the same message. What is the news?

The good news is that deliverance from evil has come. The end of evil has come. Evil has met its match. Evil will cease. Evil no longer has sway over people. **The good news is that deliverance from evil has come.**

Jesus reads a passage from Isaiah that describes what will happen when God's servant visits Israel. Note that the word: proclaim verses 18 and 19 three times. What is it that God's servant will do? There will be deliverance. This deliverance will signal the beginning of a new era. Jesus proclaimed the good news of deliverance from Isaiah beginning a new era.

Let's look at who will experience deliverance. **We know that people will experience deliverance.** But what kind of people? Look at the later half of verse 18. *To proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.*

There are various people mentioned who will benefit from the work of the servant. The poor. The captive. The blind. The oppressed. Are both Isaiah and Jesus talking literally about these various groups of people. When the servant of God comes, will he go to the poor living in slums? Will he go to prisons to open the doors for prisoners go free? Will he go to hospitals to give sight to the blind? Will he go to those cast off by society such as orphans and widows?

Kind of. These words: poor, captive, blind, and oppressed are images. The words describe the spiritual state of people. The poor refers to those who recognize that they are spiritually destitute. When they think about the holiness of God, they realize that nothing that they do will ever make them good enough to be in his presence. One might say that they have the same realization of Isaiah. When Isaiah sees the angels singing: Holy, Holy, Holy around the throne of God, he feels undone. He exclaims: Woe to me for I am a man of unclean lips. Isaiah recognized his impoverished state before the Lord.

The word: captive can also be translated the word exile. Israel knew well what it meant to be an exile. The people of Israel began as sojourners in the kingdom of Egypt. Later, God brought them into the promised land. But God expelled Israel from the promised land because of their disobedience. They lived in exile in Babylon for seventy years. They returned to their homes, but they continued to live under the reign of the Persians. When Jesus's listeners heard him read the scroll of Isaiah, they thought: We're still captives. Now we're under the thumb of the Romans. We look forward to the day when we will be free. Jesus would provide for them not deliverance from their Roman overseers. He would free them from the captivity of sin. Captives realize how sin holds us in bondage. You may wonder: what do you mean bondage? I'm a free person. If you're truly free, then why is it so hard to put down your phone when you spend time with someone? If you're truly free, then why is it that you are so diligent in maintaining your Instagram story so that you're well liked? If you're truly free, then why do you keep looking at your retirement account because you fear how market fluctuations will affect your ability to live comfortably in retirement? These are all manifestations of sin's hold over our affections. It's a manifestation of evil at work.

There's also the idea of blindness. Yes. Jesus does heal many blind people. It's interesting though that in the gospel of Luke, there's only one record of Jesus healing blindness. Before Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem, he heals blind man who recognizes that Jesus is the Son of David. This blind man recognized that Jesus is the root of Jesse. Jesus is the servant in the book of Isaiah. He is the messiah. This means that Isaiah and Jesus aren't referring just to a physical blindness. But a spiritual blindness. The servant will help those who do not understand who God is to understand who he is. Jesus adopts Isaiah's words by saying that the good news is that people will see that Jesus is indeed God incarnate. He is the one sent by the Father to save people from the bondage of sin.

The last word used is oppressed found in the later half of verse 18. This line does not come from Isaiah 61. But it comes from another part of Isaiah. Isaiah, chapter 58 (Isa 58:6). Why? What is the one set from God to do? He is to proclaim. This means he is the messenger. But in this reference to Isaiah, chapter 58, what else will he do? He will set free. The messenger and the savior are the same. The one who will rescue the oppressed is the same who proclaims the message. In Isaiah 58, Israel failed to care for the oppressed. But the new Israel, Jesus Christ will be able to set them free. He is the deliver.

Jesus proclaimed not only deliverance for the poor, the captive, the blind and to deliver them. He also proclaimed a new era. Look at verse 19. *To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.* This year of the Lord's favor is reference to the Year of Jubilee in Leviticus 25. Every fiftieth year, Israel would set all captives free, cancel all debts, and return the land to the people. This year of Jubilee would foreshadow an era where all spiritual debts would be canceled, and

people would be freed. Jesus would accomplish this year of the Jubilee by freeing people from the captivity of sin.

After the passage from the Law and prophets, someone provides an exposition of the passage. It's no surprise that after Jesus reads the passages, everyone stares at him. Look at verse 20. *And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And all the eyes of the synagogue were fixed on him.* They awaited what will come out of his mouth. In the next verse, Jesus then says: This Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. Then end of evil began that day. The defeat of evil continues to this day.

If the defeat of evil continues to this day, then how come not everyone hears it? How come not everyone rejoices over this news? It's because it requires those who have heard it to go and proclaim it. It requires those of us who believed this good news the bondage of evil is broken to go proclaim it. **Proclaim deliverance to those who are under the bondage of evil.**

What does this mean? Does that mean at Christmas dinner, you clink your glass and say: "Excuse me. Before we begin Christmas dinner, I have a few words to say. You all are under the bondage of evil. Uncle Ben, you always boast about your daughter attending Harvard. Evil. Aunt Gail, I know that you're battling breast cancer. It's an evil thing. I want to share some good news. You're free. Jesus has set you free. I'm done. Let's eat."

No. And I doubt anyone would do anything I just described. To proclaim deliverance means that we must engage with people by listening to them share their lives. When the opportunity arises, we invite them to study with us the deliverance that Jesus provides. Maybe a friend may ask you at work this week: What you planning on doing for Christmas?

You reply: Well... my church is having a Christmas Eve service. So I plan to attend. What are your plans?

We have a get together with family on Christmas day, but no real plans for Christmas Eve.

If you're free, then you're welcome to join me at Christmas Eve service. Afterward, some of my friends are getting together to watch the new Avatar film. You're welcome to join us.

That sounds nice. I'll have to think about it. I've been wanting to watch that new Avatar movie. The trailer looked awesome!

Now I don't know what you guys will talk about after Christmas Eve service. But maybe the service gives you and your friend an opportunity to talk about spiritual truths. I remember reading a study years ago, that unbelievers are open to attending church during Christmas if they are invited. Maybe the proclamation of the good news begins with a simple invitation to Christmas Eve service.

This brings us to the last question. How can we be confident in the good news that Jesus proclaimed? How do we know that it's true? What is the evidence?

We can be confident in the good news that Jesus proclaimed because he gave his life to make it happen. Jesus would die on a cross and rise from the dead to free us from the bondage of evil. He would willingly take on the consequence of our sin, death, so that we could receive his perfect life and live. We can be confident in the good news that Jesus proclaimed because he gave his life to make it happen.

Jesus arrived on the earth many years ago so that he would eventually give his life to secure deliverance from sin to those who believe. Why do we celebrate advent? It's to commemorate Jesus's birth. He came to this earth to die a death we deserved so that we could have a relationship with God. Remember the last half of verse 18. *To set at liberty those who are oppressed.* And the verse that summarizes the gospel of Luke is this: *For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost* (19:10). Jesus not only preached the good news of evil ending. He is the good news. He is the one who ends evil.

Let's say we believe this. We believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead. The power of sin is now broken. This means that the countdown to evil's demise has begun. But how come I still experience evil in my life. **We experience deliverance in part now and will experience it completely at his return.** How do we experience deliverance in part now? Before you consistently lied about the progress of your homework to your parents, but faith in Christ has revealed to you that such deceit is wrong. Before you consistently boasted of your work achievements, but you know you feel guilty for drawing such attention to yourself. Before you consistently wanted to do nothing with God, but now you're drawn to know more about God. This change of attitude represents God's deliverance. When you placed your faith in Christ's redeeming work on the cross, it began work to make you more like Christ. But Christlikeness cannot be achieved by your own strength. You need the help of the Holy Spirit.

You not only experience personal deliverance, but the church works to reverse the evil effects of sin. In the first century, the Roman empire would abandon children so that they would die due to exposure. But the church would take these children into their care. This care for the overlooked continues today as churches involve themselves in foster care, adoption,

and child sponsorship. Churches also care for the poor by opening shelters and soup kitchens to provide for their needs. While evil continues to persist, God uses the church to push it back. But there is a day when Jesus will completely conquer evil and death. It will be at his second return. When you look at verse 19: It says to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. But Jesus omitted a phrase from Isaiah 61: the day of vengeance of our God. When Jesus came the first time, he came to save. When Jesus returns the second time, he will come to judge. All the wicked and evildoers will then receive their just deserts. While evil may still be here. It has an expiration date.

Hence, we can proclaim the good news confidently. The gospel is not just something we personally believe in. It's true. Jesus was a real human being. He was born in a real place. He grew up during a real time. He truly grew up and died on a cross. He truly rose from the dead. Since there are so many things pointing to the truth of the gospel, we believe the gospel because it is true. May we have confidence to know that the good news we proclaim is true.

To summarize. What enables to proclaim the good news in Jesus's absence? The Spirit of God. The Spirit of God enables us to proclaim the good news in Jesus's absence. What is the good news that Jesus proclaimed? The good news is that deliverance from evil has come. How can we be confident in this good news? We can be confident in the good news that Jesus proclaimed because he gave his life to make it happen. Proclaim the good news that deliverance from evil has been accomplished because we are God's Spirit empowered messengers.

Remember that prophecy in Narnia. When Adam's flesh and Adam's bone sits at Cair Paravel in throne. The evil time will be over and done. Well... for the four children of Adam:

Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy to sit on their thrones, someone had to pay the cost for Edmund's rebellion. Aslan, the king of Narnia, would give his life on the stone table so that Edmund's rebellion might be paid for. Aslan's sacrifice would enable Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy to sit on the thrones of Narnia and end the evil reign of the White Witch. Likewise, Jesus came to proclaim the good news but also make it happen through his death and resurrection so that the reign of evil over our world might begin to crumble. May the Lord help us to faithfully proclaim this good news this Christmas season.